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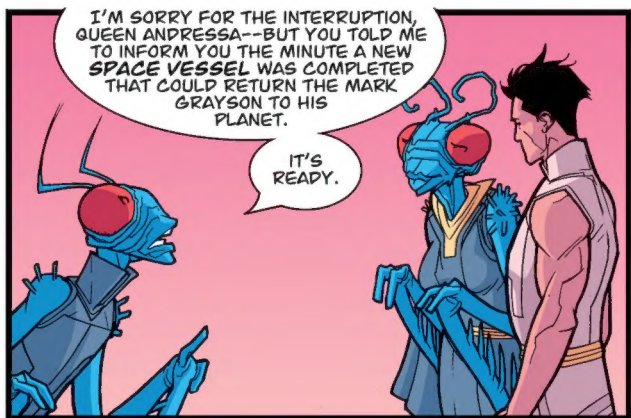
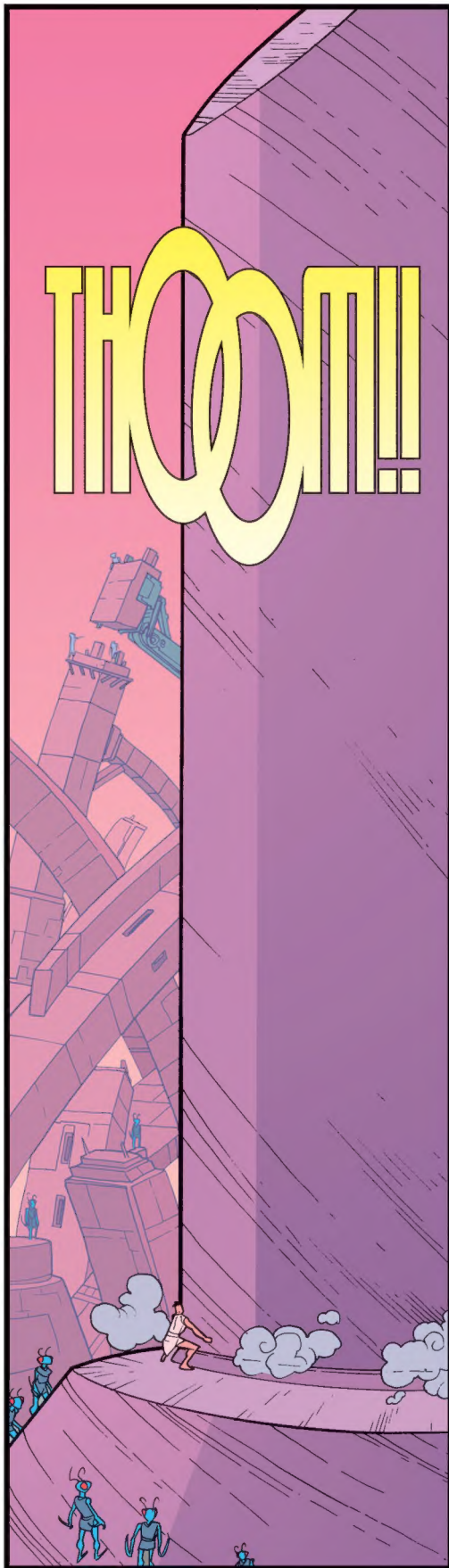
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ALMOST--

--THERE.





EXCELLENT. MAKE THE PREPARATIONS AT ONCE. I WANT THE SHIP PREPARED FOR LAUNCH BEFORE OUR SUNS BEGIN THEIR DECENT.

YES, QUEEN. YOUR WILL BE DONE.



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! I'M NOT THROUGH YET. WITH THE HELP OF YOUR ARCHITECTS I COULD HAVE THIS ENTIRE PALACE BUILT IN ANOTHER COUPLE WEEKS.

I CAN'T LEAVE NOW-- ESPECIALLY NOT TODAY.



I'D ASK YOU TO PLEASE NOT QUESTION ME IN FRONT OF MY SUBJECTS, MARK. YOUR TIME HERE HAS BEEN LONG--**TOO LONG**. THIS IS NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND THE WORK YOU'VE **ALREADY** DONE SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO APPEASE YOUR CONSCIENCE.

YOU HAVE A LIFE YOU MUST RETURN TO. I REGRET IT HAS TAKEN THIS LONG TO REDISCOVER THE TECHNOLOGY TO GET YOU HOME. YOU MUST GO.

TWO MORE WEEKS IS **NOTHING** FOR ME... I'VE **ALREADY** BEEN HERE OVER A MONTH. TWO MORE WEEKS MAY PUT ANOTHER FEW GRAY HAIRS ON MY MOTHER'S HEAD BUT I ASSURE YOU--IT'LL BE **WORTH** IT WHEN I EXPLAIN TO HER ALL THAT I'VE **DONE!**



NO. YOU MUST GO, MARK. YOU MUST GO AND BE WITH YOUR PEOPLE.

IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN YOU REMIND ME OF HIM--OF WHAT I LOST--



YEAH, MY DAD. I--



HE HAD TO COME BACK JUST LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE ME **CARE** WHEN SOMETHING BAD HAPPENED TO HIM.



AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I STILL FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT HE'S GONE. A LIFE **ENDED** AFTER LASTING SO LONG--IT DOESN'T EVEN SEEM **REAL**.

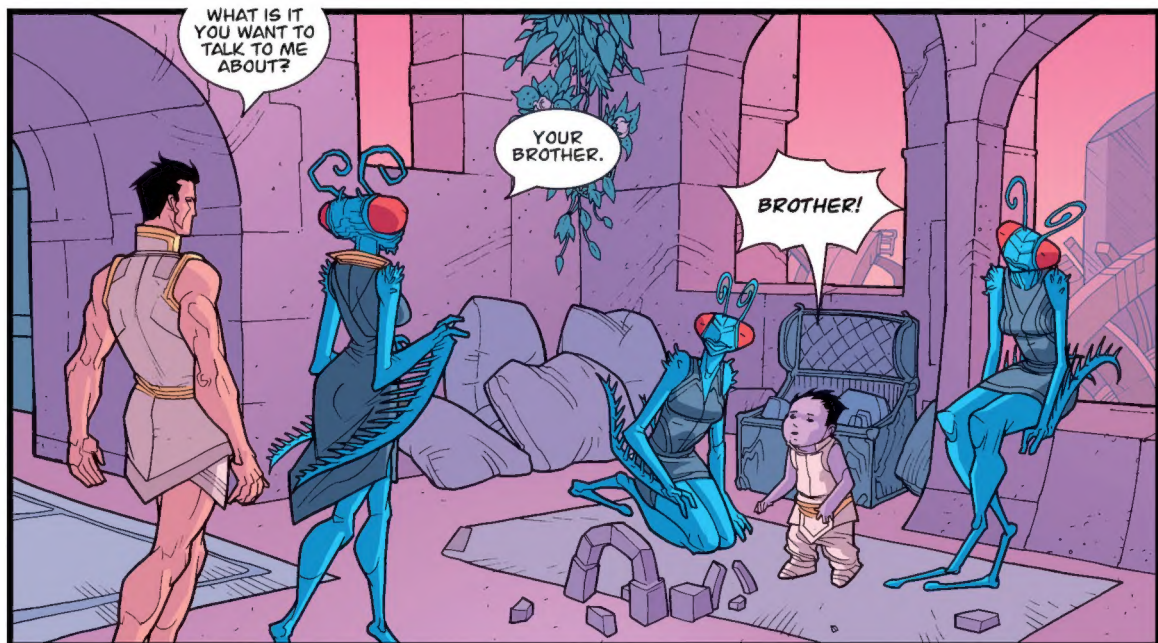


I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT--DON'T SAY THAT. HE'S **NOT** DEAD. HE'LL GET OUT OF IT SOME WAY.



I HOPE YOU ARE RIGHT. MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER KNOW.

NOW COME-- THERE IS MUCH WE MUST DISCUSS BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE.



WHAT IS IT
YOU WANT TO
TALK TO ME
ABOUT?

YOUR
BROTHER.

BROTHER!



HEY, LITTLE
GUY. YOU BEEN
PLAYING?

WHAT
ABOUT
HIM?



LOOK AT ME,
MARK. WHAT
DO YOU THINK
I WANT TO
TALK TO YOU
ABOUT?



I'M NOT
FOLLOWING
YOU. YOU'RE
NOT
SAYING--

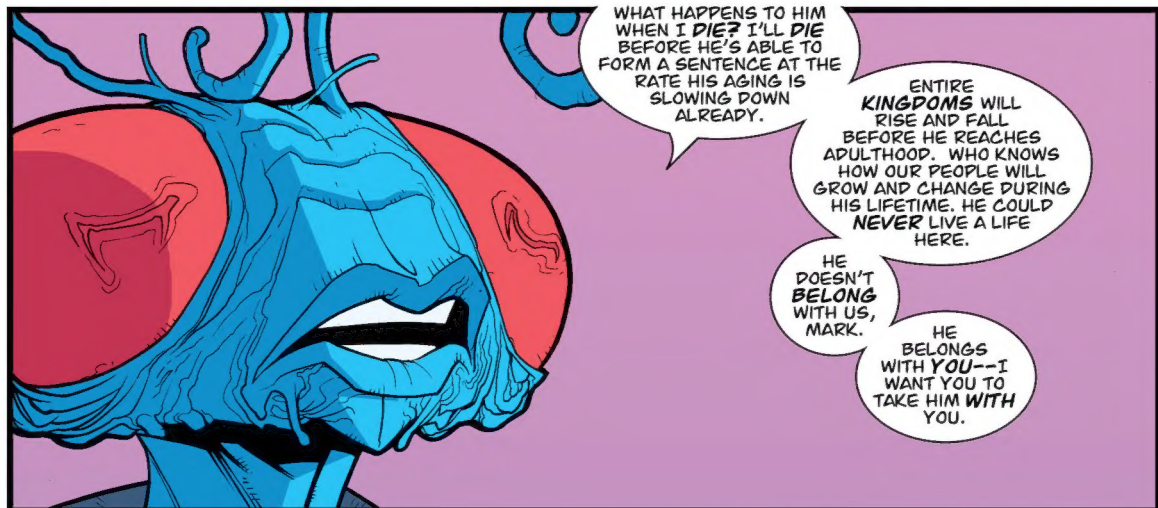


DON'T YOU SEE
HOW MUCH I'VE
AGED SINCE YOU
GOT HERE? I
UNDERSTAND THAT
TO YOU NOT MUCH
TIME HAS
PASSED--BUT
FOR ME--

MARK, BY
YOUR STANDARDS
I DON'T HAVE MUCH
TIME LEFT TO LIVE.
BY HIS STANDARDS
I DON'T--



ANDRESSA,
PLEASE--HE'S
YOUR SON. YOU
CAN'T ASK
ME TO--

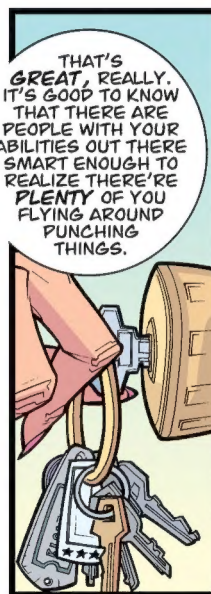
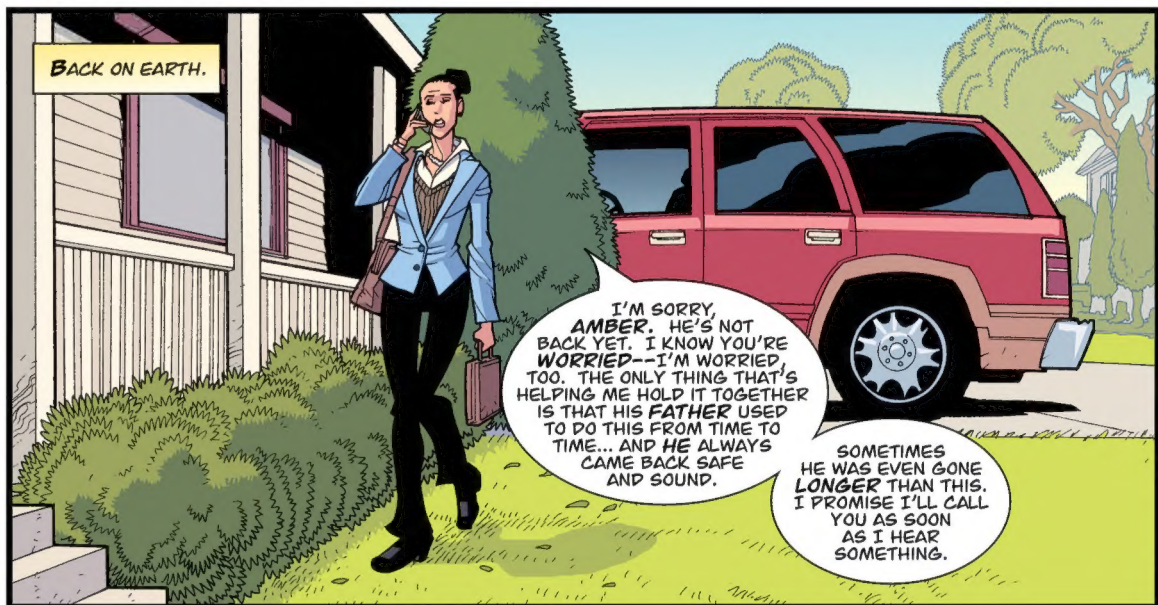


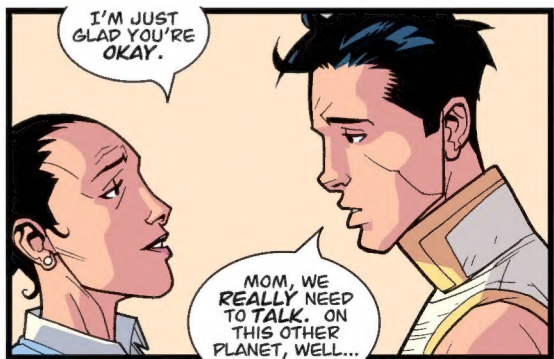
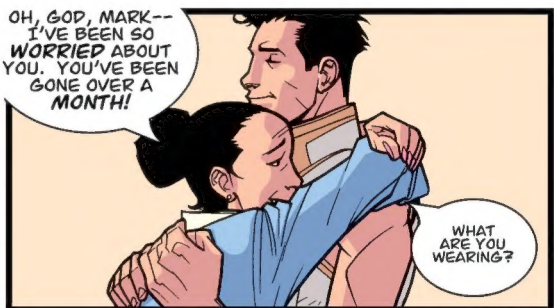
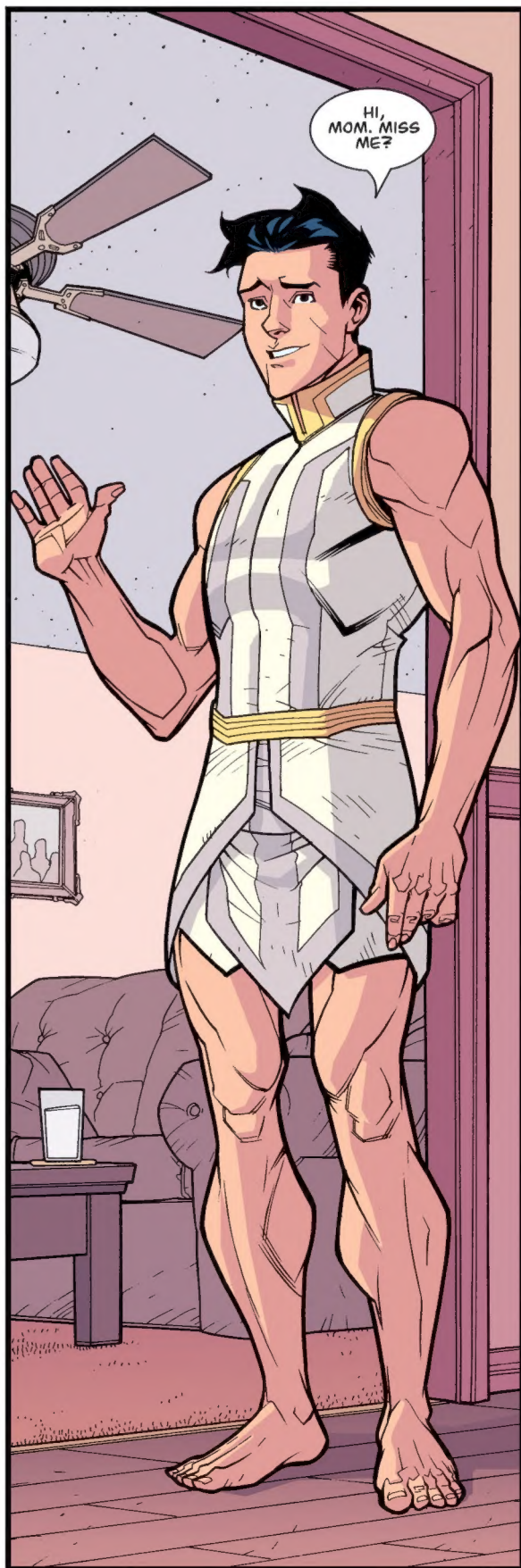
WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM
WHEN I DIE? I'LL DIE
BEFORE HE'S ABLE TO
FORM A SENTENCE AT THE
RATE HIS AGING IS
SLOWING DOWN
ALREADY.

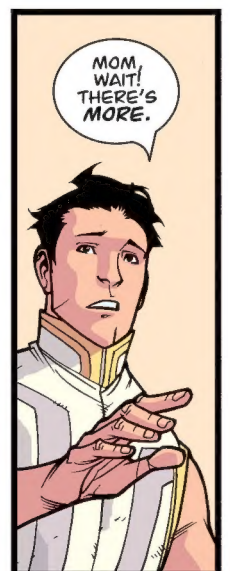
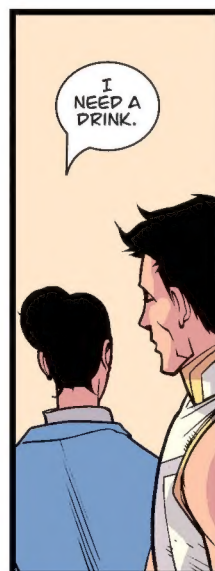
ENTIRE
KINGDOMS WILL
RISE AND FALL
BEFORE HE REACHES
ADULTHOOD. WHO KNOWS
HOW OUR PEOPLE WILL
GROW AND CHANGE DURING
HIS LIFETIME. HE COULD
NEVER LIVE A LIFE
HERE.

HE
DOESN'T
BELONG
WITH US,
MARK.

HE
BELONGS
WITH YOU--I
WANT YOU TO
TAKE HIM WITH
YOU.









WHO--?

WHERE DID HE--?

DID HE JUST CALL YOU BROTHER?

YEAH.

HE DID.

WHAT ARE YOU TELLING ME? IS HE--?

HE DID START A NEW LIFE. MOM, I--

THEY HAD A CHILD TOGETHER.

THEY? SO HE--AND THIS IS YOUR BROTHER?

HALF-BROTHER-- BUT YEAH.

SO THIS-- WOMAN-- WHY DOESN'T SHE HAVE THE CHILD? WHY IS HE HERE? WHY DID YOU BRING IT TO ME, MARK?

THESE ALIENS--THIS WOMAN--THEIR LIFE SPANS ARE SUPER SHORT, MOM. THIS WOMAN, ANDRESSA-- THAT WAS HER NAME. SHE WAS OLD BY THE TIME I LEFT.

THESE PEOPLE ONLY LIVE FOR LIKE NINE MONTHS.

BECAUSE OF DAD'S, I DON'T KNOW, DNA OR WHATEVER--THIS BABY HERE HAS A LONGER LIFE SPAN THAN THEM. HE'S AGING FAST NOW, BUT DAD SAID HE COULD STILL LIVE FOR HUNDREDS IF NOT THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

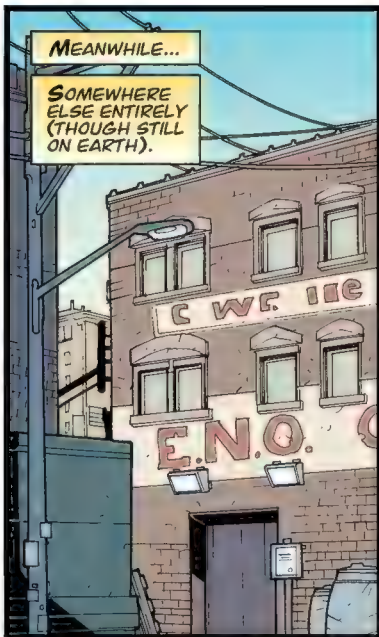
HE'D OUTLIVE EVERYONE THERE. THAT'S NO WAY FOR HIM TO BE RAISED. HE COULDN'T STAY THERE.

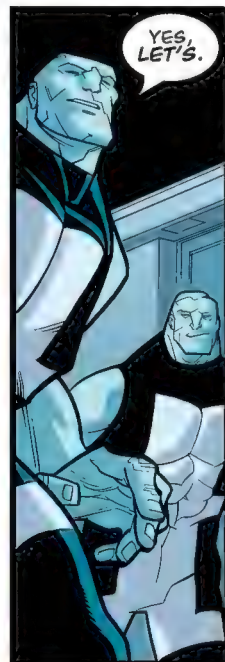
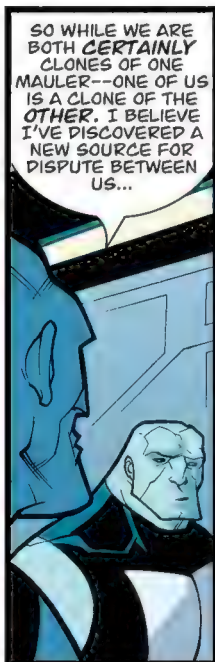
HE'S ABOUT TWO MONTHS OLD RIGHT NOW, AND HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S ALMOST TWO YEARS OLD. HIS AGING IS ALREADY STARTING TO SLOW DOWN, BUT HE COULD BE AN ADULT IN LIKE FIVE YEARS.

I KNOW IT'S HARD... I KNOW IT'S WEIRD... BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO WITH HIM. I WAS KIND OF HOPING YOU COULD TAKE CARE OF HIM.

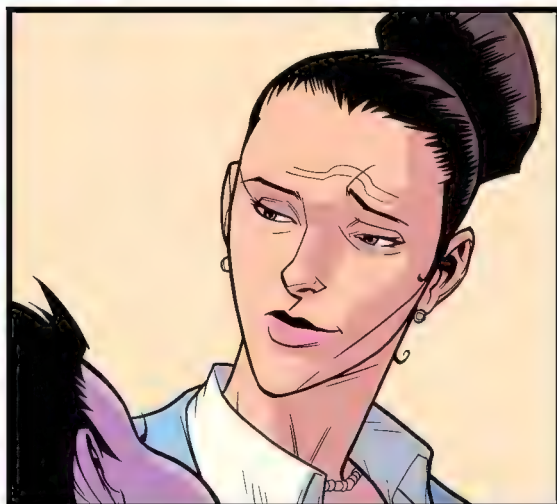
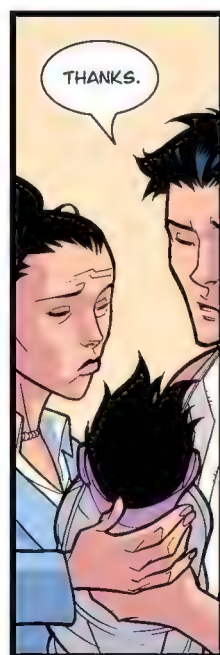
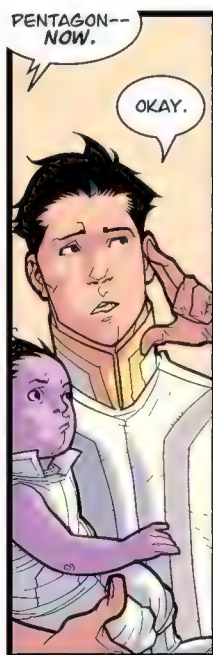
MARK?

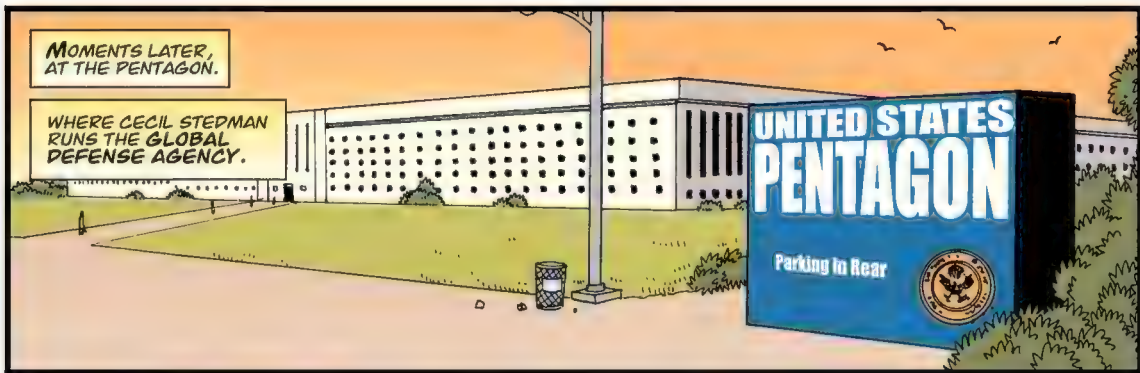
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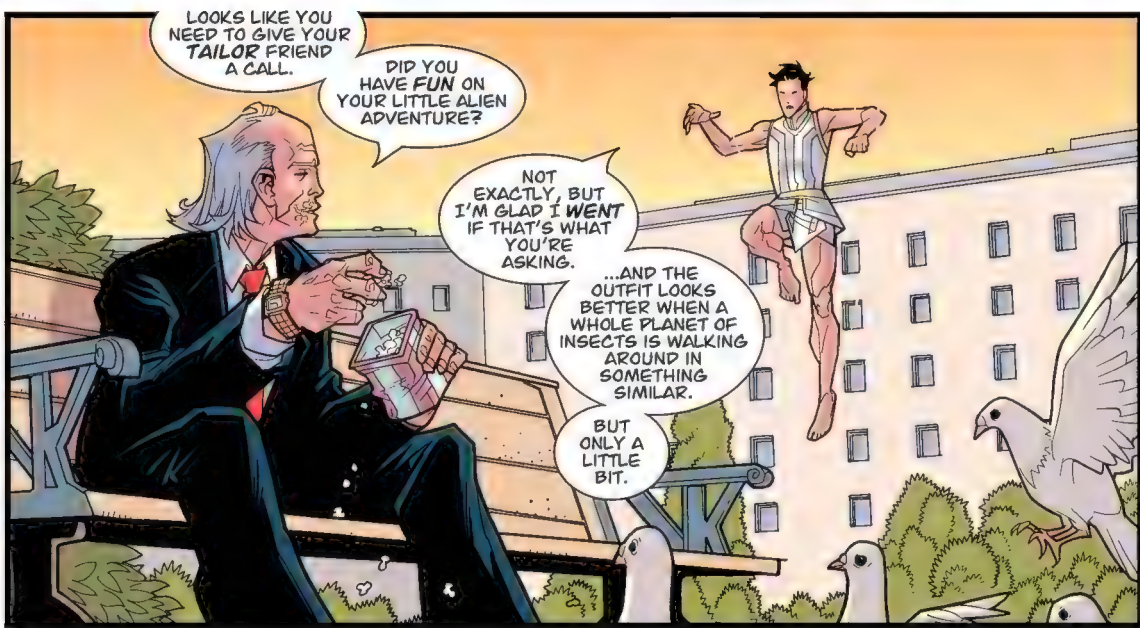






MOMENTS LATER,
AT THE PENTAGON.

WHERE CECIL STEPMAN
RUNS THE GLOBAL
DEFENSE AGENCY.



LOOKS LIKE YOU
NEED TO GIVE YOUR
TAILOR FRIEND
A CALL.

DID YOU
HAVE FUN ON
YOUR LITTLE ALIEN
ADVENTURE?

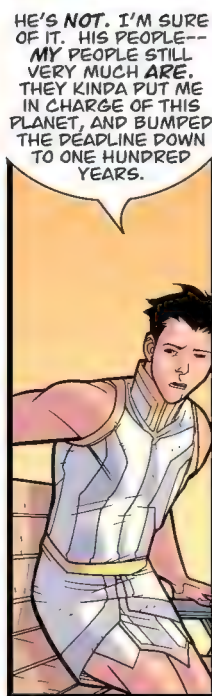
NOT
EXACTLY, BUT
I'M GLAD I WENT
IF THAT'S WHAT
YOU'RE ASKING.

...AND THE
OUTFIT LOOKS
BETTER WHEN A
WHOLE PLANET OF
INSECTS IS WALKING
AROUND IN
SOMETHING
SIMILAR.

BUT
ONLY A
LITTLE
BIT.



AND YOU SAW
YOUR FATHER.
DO YOU FEEL LIKE
HE'S NO LONGER
A THREAT TO THIS
PLANET?



HE'S NOT. I'M SURE
OF IT. HIS PEOPLE--
MY PEOPLE--
VERY MUCH ARE.
THEY KINDA PUT ME
IN CHARGE OF THIS
PLANET, AND BUMPED
THE DEADLINE DOWN
TO ONE HUNDRED
YEARS.

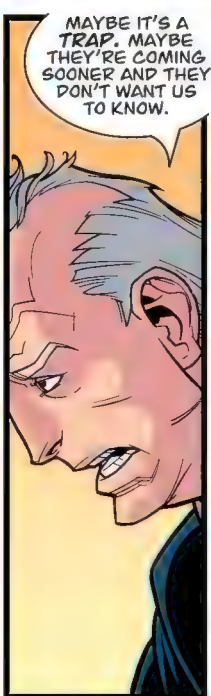


THEY
PUT YOU IN
CHARGE?



YEAH--THEY'RE SO
ARROGANT THEY THINK
I'M GOING TO COME TO
MY SENSES AND TAKE
OVER THIS PLANET
FOR THEM--OR
SOMETHING.

I DON'T
KNOW, MAYBE
THEY JUST DON'T
CARE IF I HELP
THEM OR NOT. MAYBE
ONE HUNDRED YEARS
IS THE SOONEST
THEY CAN GET OUT
HERE TO TAKE
OVER.



MAYBE IT'S A
TRAP. MAYBE
THEY'RE COMING
SOONER AND THEY
DON'T WANT US
TO KNOW.

WOW.

I HADN'T REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.

SO... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

NOTHING. PUT THAT THOUGHT OUT OF YOUR MIND. IF WHAT WE KNOW IS TRUE--IF THEY SENT SO MUCH AS FOUR VILTRUMITES TO THIS PLANET THERE WOULDN'T BE A DAMN THING WE COULD DO.

SO ALL WE CAN REALLY DO IS WAIT... AND HOPE SOMETHING COMES ALONG THAT ALLOWS US TO FIGHT THEM.

THAT MAKES SENSE.

NOW THAT WE'VE MOVED PAST THAT.

YOUR BROTHER.

YEAH.

LET YOUR MOTHER KNOW THAT WE CAN HELP WITH THAT. HAVING ANOTHER VILTRUMITE RAISED BY HER TO BE A FINE UPSTANDING CITIZEN LIKE YOU IS IN ALL OUR BEST INTERESTS.

WE COULD ARRANGE LEGITIMATE ADOPTION PAPERS AND GIVE THE CHILD BIRTH RECORDS AND EVEN EMPLOY SOME LOW-TECH HOLOGRAPHICS TO MATCH HIS SKIN COLOR.

THE ADVANCED AGING WILL BE TRICKY. WE COULDN'T ALLOW THE CHILD TO ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BECAUSE SOMEONE WOULD NOTICE HIS... UNIQUENESS... SO WE WOULD PROVIDE A PRIVATE TUTOR.

WE COULD MAKE THIS VERY EASY ON HER. OR WE COULD HELP YOU LOCATE A FOSTER FAMILY... IF SHE DIDN'T WANT THE CHILD.

I'LL LET HER KNOW.

GOOD. NOW I'VE GOT TO REPRIMAND YOU.

I KNOW THIS TURNED OUT FOR THE BEST. SEEING YOUR FATHER, GETTING MORE INFO ON THE VILTRUMITES, YOUR BROTHER... BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO DISOBEY ME AGAIN.

HOLD ON, YOU'RE TELLING ME I WAS RIGHT TO GO--BUT THAT I SHOULDN'T DO THIS AGAIN?

THAT'S KINDA SILLY. DID I EVEN MISS ANYTHING WHEN I WAS GONE THESE LAST TWO MONTHS?

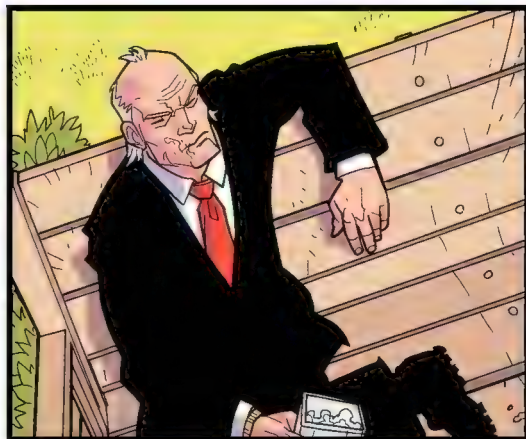
A BEING CALLED OMNIPOTUS TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD. I HAD TO AMASS ALMOST THE ENTIRE SUPERHERO COMMUNITY AND EVEN HIRE ON THOSE CAPES BASTARDS FROM NEW YORK TO HELP OUT.

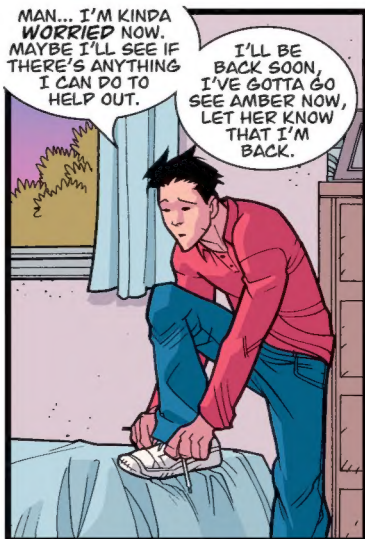
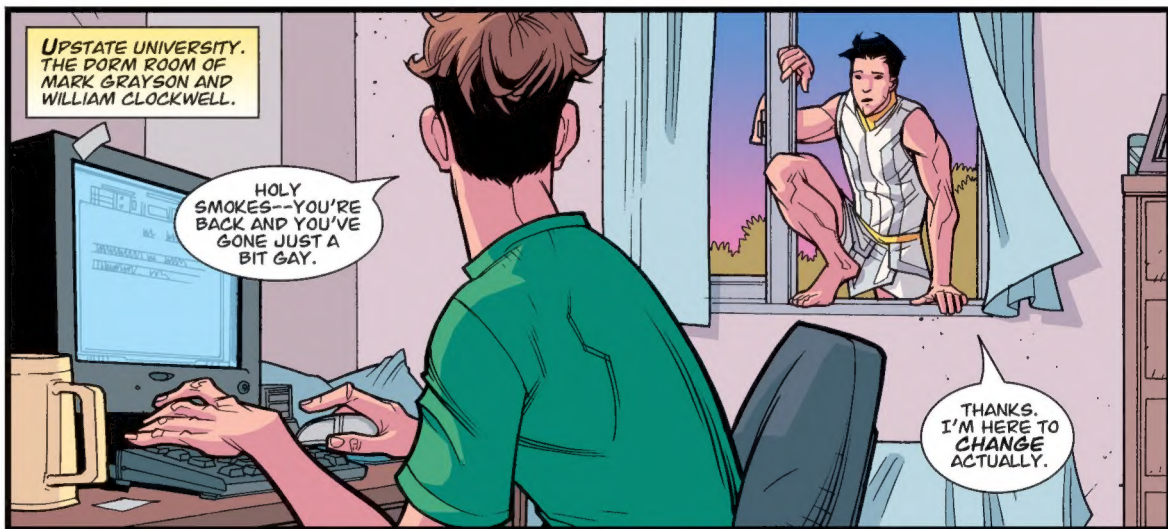
WE ALMOST DIDN'T WIN THAT ONE.

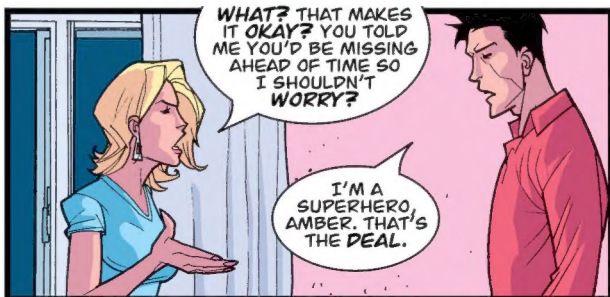
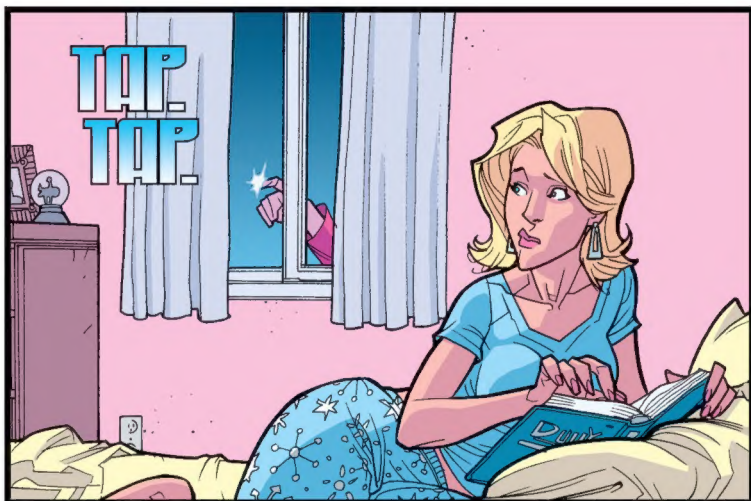
BUT YOU DID.

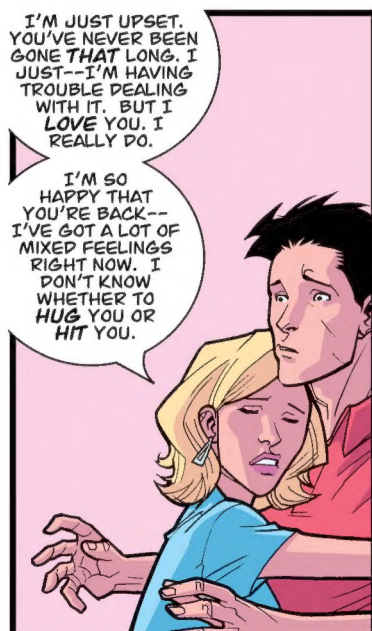
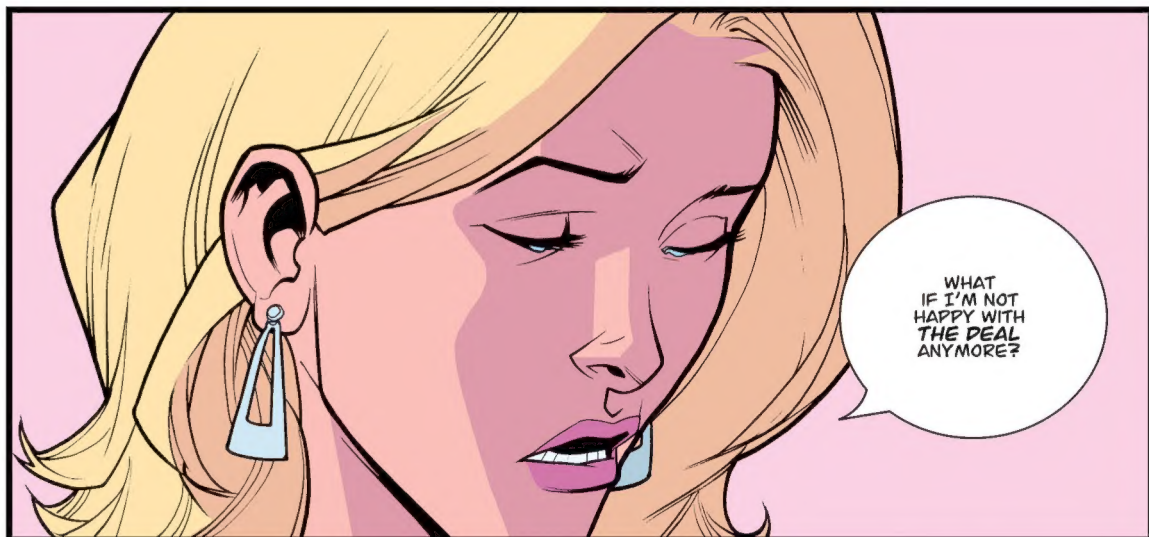
THAT'S NOT THE POINT, MARK. THE POINT IS YOU WERE NEEDED.

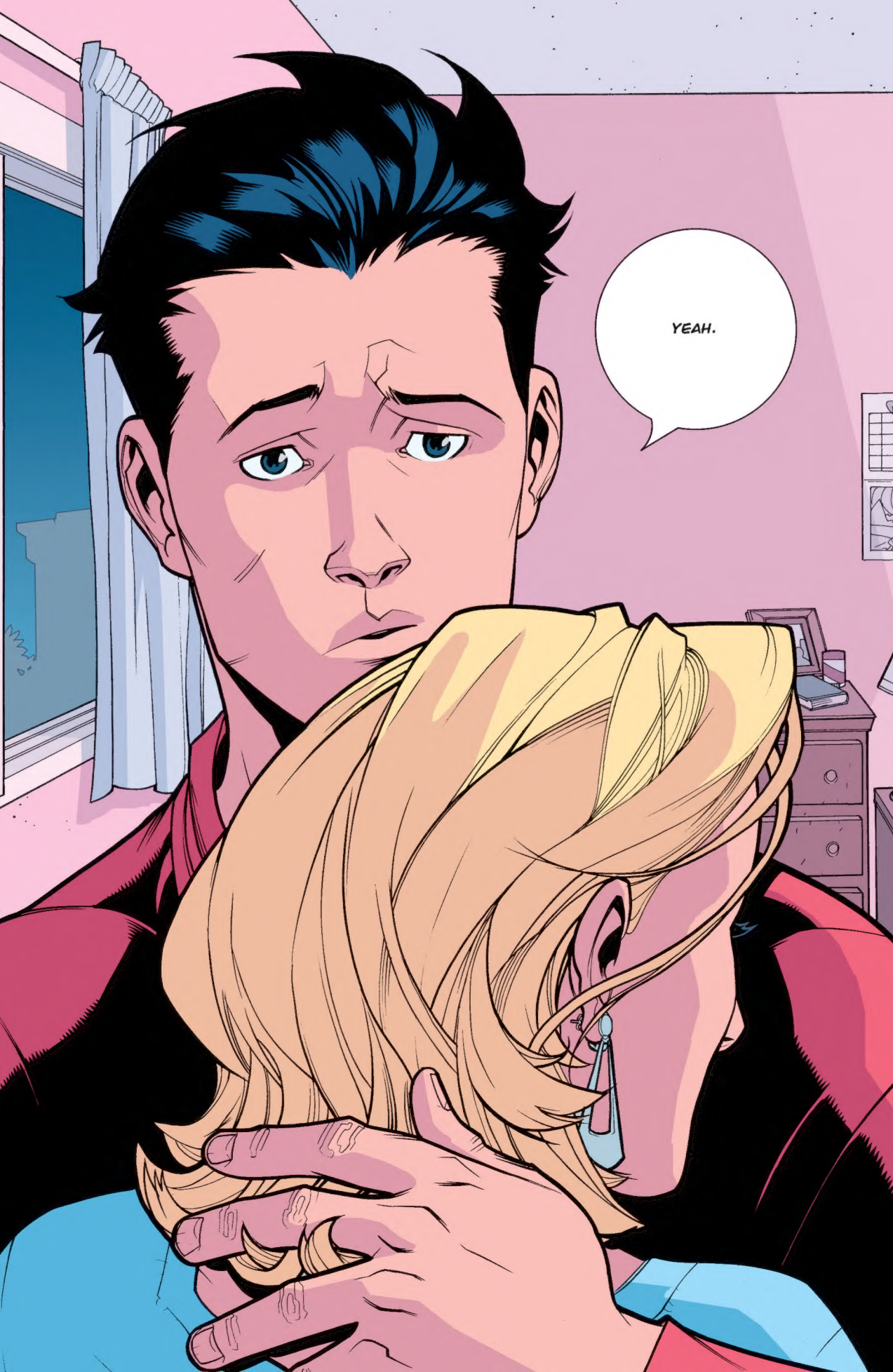
ACTUALLY, I THINK THE POINT IS THAT AN ALIEN WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED IF I HAD STAYED HERE--AND WHILE I WAS GONE--YOU GUYS SAVED THIS PLANET WITHOUT ME.











YEAH.